

June 4, 2008

From: The Development Standards Working Group

To: City of Helena - Lewis and Clark County Consolidated Planning Board
Lewis and Clark Board of County Commissioners

RE: The Development Standards Working Group's zoning proposal for the Helena Valley Planning Area which includes:

- Applicability and grandfathering provisions;
- General development standards;
- A menu of 10 types of zoning designations; and,
- A preliminary land use chart.

On May 30th, 2008, the Development Standards Working Group voted unanimously to send the attached zoning proposal for the Helena Valley Planning Area to the City-County Consolidated Planning Board and to the Lewis and Clark County Board of County Commissions. This proposal is the result of more than three years of hard work, 6 public meetings, and hundreds of public comments.

The Development Standards Working Group (DSWG) is an unusual group of stakeholders from a wide variety of perspectives who came together voluntarily and worked hard to find common ground. The DSWG includes representatives from the Helena Building Industry Association, Plan Helena, Montana Smart Growth Coalition, a representative of the City-County Consolidated Planning Board and a wide variety of individuals including city and county residents as well as engineers, planners, builders, public health officials, fire fighters, and ground water hydrologists. The DSWG zoning proposal is based on common sense protections for property, water, and wildlife, and contains a menu of 10 different zoning designations. DSWG believes its proposal will create a much more predictable development process.

The DSWG recommends that the Planning Board use the DSWG proposal as the basis for ideas to present to the public for their comments, additions, or deletions in the implementation of zoning in the Helena Valley Planning area. We also recommend that Planning Board begin to take the following steps within 90 days:

1. Direct staff to draft regulations based on the DSWG proposal including any necessary definitions, and to review and revise the preliminary land use chart and use; and,
2. Move forward with the aim of replacing the interim zoning with these zoning regulations as soon as possible after holding public hearings.

Additionally, the DSWG recommends that the Planning Board and County Commissioners take the following steps before they draft a zoning map or otherwise apply the 10 different zoning designations:

1. Distribute written information to landowners and residents in the Helena Valley Planning Area about the 10 different zoning designations with a survey asking people which type of designation they would like for their area of the Helena Valley; and,
2. Hold working public meetings in sub-areas of the Helena Valley in order to get as much public involvement as possible in drawing the zoning map and making zoning designations.

We are happy to answer any questions about the DSWG zoning proposal and we would like to thank you for considering it.